

[Rev. J. D. Gordon.]

We have read with apprehension and alarm the statements in Toronto and Halifax papers of reports received at San Francisco of the murder of Mr. Gordon by the natives of Erromanga.

While anxious for further intelligence we still trust these rumours have risen from some notice of the death of the Rev. G. N. Gordon some years ago, and our reason for arriving at this conclusion is, that our latest advices from Melbourne and Sydney, whether written or printed, contain no notice of any recent disaster such as that now reported.

We have before us a letter written by Mr. Gordon, from Pohnia Bay, Erromanga, on the fifth of January, at which time he was well, and the letter makes no mention of any misunderstanding with the natives. The letter was carried by a native to Dillon's Bay, and came by Australia. In itself it amounts to little as evidence of the falsity of the report, for six months have passed since it was written. Our hopes for the best rest on the fact that no hint of such an occurrence has been given by correspondence or papers from Melbourne or Sydney by last mail.

Missionary Intelligence.

Perishing Persians.

The distress in Persia is unabated. None are better informed as to the facts respecting it than the American missionaries, who have been at work there for thirty years. These men, some of them widely known in this country, write in earnest appeals to America to send forward aid.

The Rev. J. H. Shedd writes:—"In many places half the population had perished. . . . In Ispahan 14,000 are officially reported as having died. . . . In Shiraz, and vicinity, whole families have died off, and in some instances the corpses have been devoured by the survivors. Thousands more must die in the villages unless relieved from abroad. Among the pastoral tribes—numbering over a million—the direst miseries are experienced. The pastures have dried up. The flocks and herds have perished. Their dependence for food is gone. The grass may revive in the spring, but it will be three years, at least, before the flocks

and herds can be renewed, and one year, at least, before there can be a harvest to supply them with bread. Multitudes are fleeing from the famine-stricken provinces to the province where our missionaries are located, and encamping—hundreds of them—within sight of the mission premises.

Some small contributions have been placed in the hands of the missionaries by the English churches and from Germany, and they have been able, accordingly, to distribute some little aid, and a most powerful indorsement it is of Christianity in that land of Mohammedanism. Not only the refugees who are flocking to them, but tens of thousands in the famine-stricken district themselves, our countrymen tell us, they could reach and save them from dying.

Africa.

A Moravian missionary at Engotini, South Africa, says:—"We are privileged to see some fruits of our labour, and it is encouraging to see one heathen after another first begin to attend the church, then clothe himself decently—a sure sign that he has received an impression from what he has heard—and at last request baptism. Even the features become gradually transformed as the poor heathen opens his heart to the reception of the Gospel. Change of this kind are, of course, more commonly to be seen in heathen kraals than at the mission stations, where outward conformity to the rules and observances of the community is not unfrequently attended without the preliminary change of the heart."

Chili.

Very interesting news comes of the work of colporteurs in Chili. In Santiago and Valparaiso many copies of the Bible have been eagerly bought. In the latter city, a Chilean in tears thanked God that the colporteur had ever come to his house with the Gospel message. A Chinaman, who spoke Spanish freely, bought a Testament for himself and another for a friend. The Valparaiso Bible Society never had so many patrons and coadjutors as at the present time. In soliciting the annual subscriptions for sustaining its operations, we have hardly met with a single refusal. Its philanthropic and magnanimous aims have won the co-operation of some who never had before subscribed, while others have augmented their subscriptions two, three, and fourfold. An increased supply of Spanish Scriptures has been ordered from London as well as from New York. The new edition of the Spanish Bible, published in Madrid, is received here with favor; every copy has been sold, and others have been bespoken before their arrival. This, we trust, may not long be delayed.